

## **THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BCHA MEMBERSHIP**

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**BCH of Oregon**

The Back Country Horsemen of America is not a typical, socially oriented saddle club. The difference between our organization and other equestrian groups is *our commitment to be involved in protecting our heritage of backcountry stock use across the country*. BCHA is a national trail advocacy organization with some very serious purposes that require serious commitment. These purposes are incorporated in every Chapter's Bylaws/Constitution. Our members must be made aware of the philosophy, mission and purposes established for BCHA by its founders and members should support them. Many however, support them with a casual, "Yeah, those are good ideas, I can go along with that." But what is truly required is *the commitment for active support*. That means actual and personal involvement in activities that support the mission of BCHA.

BCHA exists to protect our right and heritage to use our recreational pack and saddle stock in our wilderness/backcountry. That does not mean that our Chapters can't have fun. Our organization offers great camaraderie, all kinds of social functions and varied riding and educational opportunities for horsemen of all levels of experience. BCHA offers all the same experiences as most trail riding saddle clubs, but we go a step further, by accepting the mission of protecting those opportunities *for all horsemen, present and especially future*. They back that up with their commitment and dedication by spending personal time working to achieve the purposes of BCHA. That doesn't mean that we can't have a diversified membership. We have members that don't own a horse, but they work to support the purposes of BCHA. We have many members that rarely ride in the backcountry, but they work to keep the trails open for all of us.

BCHA is the largest and oldest national volunteer group of horsemen in the country today. We are actively sought to speak and represent our interest in wilderness and backcountry issues on the national level. We're all aware that many decisions affecting our local use are made at the national level. *That is why BCHA is special and different*.

There is nothing wrong with trail riding saddle clubs organized for social purposes; they certainly offer experiences that can be a lot of fun. Many equestrians wish for that type of commitment free opportunity. Those

equestrians need to join such a group. BCHA is not for all horsemen or women. If, however, they wish to work to protect the very experience they enjoy up to the national level, then they may be ready to accept the responsibility of membership in BCHA. Many of our members need to be commended for joining other equestrian groups, as well as BCHA. That is commitment.

To reiterate the purposes of BCHA, they are as follows:

1. *To Perpetuate* the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness areas.
2. *To Work* to insure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.
3. *To Assist* the various governments, state, and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource.
4. *To Educate*, encourage and solicit active participation in the use of the backcountry resource by stock users and the general public commensurate with our heritage.
5. *To Foster* and encourage the formation of new state organizations.

## **THE PHILOSOPHY OF BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN of AMERICA**

Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA) is a service organization working in the backcountry and educating the users of the backcountry. These two elements, along with a determination to protect the heritage of back country stock use, are the primary factors of our existence. In a five-year period we contributed 557,000 hours of volunteer work for various agencies. BCHA has achieved unsurpassed national credibility by committing our own personal sweat to this huge volunteer effort. What better way to prove our dedication to the backcountry, to meet our purposes and to build our credibility as horsemen that really do care?

Our Chapter, as well as our members, has the obligation and responsibility to support the above purposes *by action*. Purpose #1 and #2 means *we will be involved* to perpetuate the use of equines in the backcountry. That involvement means in Chapter, State and National BCHA affairs as well as public agency issues affecting our use.

Purpose #3 means *we will be involved* in all levels of Legislative/Public Lands because that is a way to meet purposes #1 and #2.

Purpose #4 means *we will be involved* in and provide

education opportunities for the public, the State organization, and the Chapters because that is a way to meet purposes #1 and #2.

Purpose #5 means *we will be involved* with expansion to increase our membership so we have the strength of a national organization to meet purposes #1 and #2.

*There is a membership obligation in BCHA.* If the organization is to function to meet its purposes, each Chapter must make the commitment to step up to the plate to be involved. Individual members are the ones that meet that commitment. We are a grassroots organization with our strength in our membership. BCHA builds through a pyramid with a broad base of local membership, through the state organizations, and peaking at the national organization of BCHA.

We are a volunteer organization, and as such we understand there is a limited amount of time members can spend on BCHA. Some members can spend more time than others because of passion, inclination, or just more available time. What is important is that as a member of BCHA, you take the responsibility and the commitment to spend what time you can. Your Chapter officers are certainly examples of those with that commitment. They can certainly use your help. Through this kind of determination, you will insure that BCHA will continue to exist to protect our heritage of backcountry stock use on virtually all public lands.